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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 USNATO 000110

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SUBJECT: NSA HADLEY'S 21 FEBRUARY DISCUSSION WITH NATO SYG
DE HOOP SCHEFFER

Classified By: Charge Richard Olson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: De Hoop Scheffer described European weakness as playing out in Allies, approaches to Afghanistan (lack of unity of purpose), Russia (desire not to rock the boat), and missile defense (ditto). Mr. Hadley pressed the SYG to have ISAF do more on counternarcotics, and an augmented civilian presence in Afghanistan. On Russia, Mr. Hadley emphasized that the USG would cooperate where it could, and stand up for its interests where it could not. SYG argued for a NATO debate on policy toward Russia. On Kosovo, Mr. Hadley expressed concerns about a gap between UNMIK drawdown and the stand-up of the ESDP mission. End Summary.

AFGHANISTAN: NO EUROPEAN ALIBIS

2 (C) SYG De Hoop Scheffer opened the conversation by saying that the Alliance faced a &essaging and marketing problem& brought about by a &erception gap& between the US and Europe: the US regarded Afghanistan as the front line in the war on terror, while Europe lacked the necessary cultural identity to see Afghanistan in a unified way. Some allies favored a robust military policy, others focused on the comprehensive approach but sometimes as an alibi for not providing additional troops. In that regard, the robust US presentations on 26 January and at Seville were most welcome, but the US could not expect that Europeans would respond in two weeks to what had taken Americans six months to develop. Mr. Hadley responded that the US intention had not been to impose a tasking on the SYG or European allies, but rather to provide resources in response to NATO,s request and allow the SYG to skillfully use American contributions to build European support. The SYG acknowledged that it was his job to ensure that the comprehensive approach did not become an alibi for Europeans.

13. (C) Mr. Hadley said the USG thought ISAF could do more on counternarcotics, in particular interdicting the narco-traffickers. The SYG replied that the NATO OpPlan allowed for limited ISAF support, but a coherent counternarcotics (CN) strategy seemed to be missing. Mr. Hadley said the USG believes it has an effective plan, especially over the long-term, but we might not get to the long-term without a good short-term strategy. In the short-term, interdictions were important. Ambassador Nuland

added that it would be useful to brief Allies on the overall CN strategy.

14. (C) Mr. Hadley said that a more robust civilian presence was needed; the EU, UN and NATO were all underpowered on the civilian side. Consideration was being given to dual or triple-hatting arrangements. The SYG replied that the weak link was the UN, especially SRSK Koenigs, and that the problem with triple-hatting was that the international community did not have the extraordinary powers it has in the Balkans, and so any new arrangements would have to be sold to Karzai.

EUROPEAN WEAKNESS PLAYS OUT IN RUSSIA, MD

15. (C) Continuing on the theme of European weakness, the SYG pointed out FM Steinmeier's recent criticism of US Missile Defense policy, suggesting it amounted to a plea to "rock the European boat," and expressed the view that NATO needed to take a more vigorous position with regard to Russia. Mr. Hadley said that the USG had hoped that Putin's legacy would be the creation of democratic institutions that could serve to constrain the power of the president. Unfortunately, Putin had in the end not shared this vision, and the strategic partnership based on shared values had not been achieved. Nonetheless, there were areas in which the US and Russia could work together on the basis of mutual self interest (especially Iran and non-proliferation generally), and we would contain the areas in which we could not work together. What was needed was the Europeans to have a frank conversation about Russia and arrive at a European policy on

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Russia, then come to NATO for a transatlantic discussion.

16. (C) The SYG again observed that there was no strong European leadership. He had personally been disappointed that Merkel had raised expectations at last year's Wehrkunde, but then had been completely overshadowed by Putin this year. (The SYG noted that he had been the only European to challenge Putin at Munich.) That said, NATO needed to take strong positions with Russia on three issues: Kosovo, enlargement, and missile defense. On Kosovo, Russia appeared to be objecting for tactical reasons, to get the best deal possible at the UNSC. NATO needed to signal that this was not the Congo; it was a priority one issue for European security. On enlargement, and particularly in the lead up to the 08 summit, NATO needed to make clear that it would not be subject to Russian bullying on enlargement decisions. On missile defense, the Alliance needed to have an internal debate, which might be divisive, but which in the end would signal to Russia that missile defense was not only a US issue.

17. (C) Mr. Hadley agreed that the Alliance should reiterate, as we have said for 15 years, that enlargement is not subject to Russian blackmail. On missile defense, Mr. Hadley emphasized that the systems were defensive in nature and had been briefed extensively to Russia and NATO. Bringing NATO into the discussion was broadly consistent with US policy over the past fifteen years. More broadly, we needed to cooperate where we could, stand up for our interests where they diverged, and contain areas where we could not cooperate.

18. (C) Finishing his riff on European weakness, the SYG shared his firm conviction that a strong Europe was in the US national interest. In that regard, the constitutional crisis within the EU was sucking all the energy out of the system.

2008 NATO SUMMIT

¶9. (C) Turning to the 08 Summit, which he described as POTUS's legacy summit, the SYG said he wanted deliverables to be: real progress in Afghanistan; resulting in more people on the planet living under the rule of law and democracy; a Europe free and democratic, including in the Balkans which meant finishing Kosovo; and enhancement of the Global Partnership program. All of these areas needed major investment between now and next spring.

¶10. (C) Mr. Hadley said he would add capabilities to the SYG's list. As a military alliance, NATO needed to reverse declining capabilities and enhance its sense of solidarity (removing caveats, augmenting forces in Afghanistan, sharing the duty to go in harm's way). The SYG readily agreed, adding that in this regard as in others, Germany was critical. Ambassador Nuland suggested that the key was building support for these ideas amongst the big continental countries: Germany, Spain, Italy, and France. Nuland added that defense spending also needed to be addressed. The SYG said that if he called for defense spending at two-percent of GDP, some would say there was no agreed Alliance benchmark and it was a question of quality not quantity. Ambassador Nuland said we should emphasize the commitment on defense spending agreed at Riga.

KOSOVO: US CONCERNS ABOUT THE EU/UN GAP

¶11. (C) Mr. Hadley said the USG was concerned that there would be a security gap between UNMIK drawdown and ESDP mission stand-up at the critical moment of transition. Ideally there would be an overlap between the forces, not a shortfall. The USG had not reached a formal decision on whether to support the ESDP mission, but did want the mission to succeed. We would have to address NATO-related issues. The SYG replied that Solana realizes that the risk of a security gap exists, especially after the recent incidents involving the deaths of protesters.

¶12. (C) Participation:

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US:
Mr. Hadley
Ambassador Nuland
NSC Senior Director Ansley
DCM Olson (notetaker)

NATO:
Secretary General De Hoop Scheffer

SIPDIS
Director of Private Office Shuer
Deputy Director of Private Office Manso
SYG's Personal Secretary Rutgers

¶13. (U) This cable has been coordinated with NSC Staff.
OLSON